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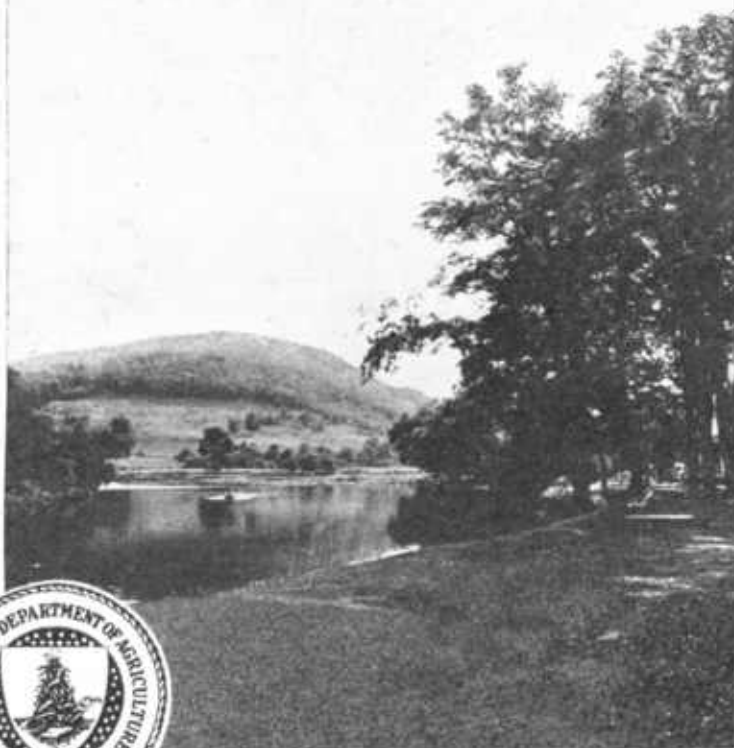
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# U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' BULLETIN No. 1325

## RURAL PLANNING *The* SOCIAL ASPECTS



**T**HIS BULLETIN is practically an exhibit of actual examples of rural planning by rural people.

It shows their endeavor not only to create and improve their own institutions, such as recreation places, public grounds and public places, and trade and civic centers, but to conserve for the permanent use of rural people those institutions and auxiliaries of rural life, of proved value, that they already have.

It shows especially that country people do believe in beauty in country places; that they appreciate it; and that they can and do afford civic beauty in their own environment.

Its purpose is not to tell how things should be done but to show what has actually been done.

It is hoped that the story of how these instances came about will encourage country people everywhere to plan for beautiful surroundings while planning for better farming.

## RURAL PLANNING—THE SOCIAL ASPECTS

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### WHY RURAL PLANNING.

**R**URAL PLANNING is about to have its day in court. We have heard much in recent years, and rightly so, of city planning, the proper arrangement, development, and use of city land, utilities, and institutions, in order to bring about the greatest well being and enjoyment of the citizens. Much has been accomplished toward making cities more orderly, comfortable, and more satisfactory places in which to live.

But half the people and almost all the territory of the United States are outside of organized cities. As the country has developed, the necessity of doing in a general way for the country what city planning has done for the city has become increasingly apparent. Proper construction and orderly arrangement of roads, villages, public grounds and buildings, farms, farm homes, rural parks, and gateways to town and country, bearing in mind good taste as well as utility, can accomplish much. Rural planning involves not only the construction of the new, but the preservation through private benefaction or local government of the old, especially that of community interest, such as picnic and playgrounds, and spots of natural beauty or historic interest—lake shores, river banks, hills commanding good views, waterfalls, scenic drives, glens, local monuments, and memorial places. These are the common property of the people, and should be preserved for the use of the people for all time.

The problem of rural planning may be approached from various angles, such as the economic, the technical, or the social. It would not be difficult, perhaps, to prove that planned rural development would be an economic asset to the farmer, the community, and the State, but that is not the purpose of this bulletin.

The technical work of rural planning, such as the actual structural work in building roads, bridges, parks, farm homes, and public grounds, or the drawing up or putting into execution of landscaping or planting plans, as such, important though it all is, can not receive consideration here. We are interested rather in the social viewpoint, that which affects the human side of farm population groups and community life, especially as applied to country living conditions. Such a study should show the incentive, the motive, the difficulties encountered, and the successes achieved, by groups of rural people in their attempts to discover the beautiful in nature and to reveal it, and to influence the production of beau-

tiful things in public places, and should prove helpful in estimating the value of a policy of rural planning in the development of American country life.

## **SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF RURAL PLANNING.**

### **RECREATION PLACES.**

Much has been written in recent years concerning the need of increasing the recreation, play, and athletic facilities of city people. It has been argued that country people get enough physical exercise from the manual labor they perform, but this leaves out of consideration the fact that much farm labor is such a severe and continuous strain that it develops certain physical defects which make necessary corrective exercises and forms of relaxation in the nature of games and play. It is well known that too much or too long-continued physical labor is sometimes deadening to the soul and benumbing to the spirit. On the other hand, one of the chief values of games is that they develop initiative, agility, self control, leadership, teamwork, and the capacity for cooperation.

Formerly the rural population found recreation in picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing, or hunting. People were free to go to a neighboring hill, forest, lake, or stream for their outings. These were then part of the public domain open to everyone, but they are now rapidly passing into the hands of private owners who exclude the public from their use. Unless a determined effort is soon made, preferably by State and local governments, strongly supported by local organizations, to preserve these natural heritages for the use of the people, one of the most pleasant and effective sources of rural recreation and enjoyment will have passed forever.

#### **LOCAL RESERVE HOLLAND GLEN, BELCHERTOWN, MASS.**

In western Massachusetts, near the northern end of the Holyoke Range, a spring gives rise to a small stream which, fed by other springs on its way, flows through Belchertown and eventually finds an outlet in the Connecticut River. Shortly after its rise it spreads over a wide ledge of rocks and begins a picturesque course with a drop of about 14 feet. (Fig. 1.) This is the beginning of Holland Glen, named after J. G. Holland, the talented author and editor, during the latter part of the last century, who was born near the glen, and whose family is said to have owned it. For a distance of half a mile the stream has cut a gorge from 40 to 100 feet deep and from 75 to 250 feet wide at the top. At the other end of the glen are the lower falls, 200 feet below the first. Between the two falls, within an area of about 8 acres, is a scene of great beauty and one of exceptional interest to lovers of nature. The glen is carpeted with a profuse growth of moss and ferns and such flowers as laurel, anemone, trailing arbutus, hepatica, trillium, and dog-tooth violets. There is a fine stand of old-growth timber, consisting of hemlock, pines, birch, oak, ash, and beech. This is said to be the only remaining primeval forest in that section and one which, if destroyed, would take centuries to replace.

For more than a century the citizens of Belchertown and vicinity had enjoyed the delights of the glen. During all these years the

people of the village had thought of it almost as their own. Only a few miles from the town center and with a good road leading to it, they had looked upon it as their outdoor playground. Family



FIG. 1.—Holland Glen, Belchertown, Mass.

parties, farmers' clubs, granges, Sunday schools, churches, schools, and societies made it a common picnic ground.

The glen was more than a local institution. Its fame had extended for miles. It was well known in Amherst, Northampton, Holyoke, and Springfield. Its attractions appealed to the citizens

and college students of these places and they came to the glen by groups and by societies. Visitors even came from New York and Boston.

Not social desires alone were gratified at the glen. It had a many-sided appeal. Botany classes found their richest material there. To students of geology it revealed the story of the earth's growth. The zoologist found a fertile field for his study, and the artist encountered a challenge in attempting to picture the charms of the scenery.

"Who owns the glen?" What difference did it make? Judging by its use it belonged to the people. As far back as memory and even tradition went it had been freely used by everyone. Why think of the future? But as often happens in such matters, complacency received a sharp awakening. News came that a lumber company was about to acquire title to the land at the upper end and cut the timber. The result, it was feared, would be the drying up of the stream and falls and the practical destruction of the place as a public picnic ground and haunt for nature lovers.

Belchertown had a local historical society with about 30 members. Some prominent members sensed the danger of the situation and began agitation, especially through newspapers, for ownership of the glen by the society. One member immediately took an option on the timber, a committee was appointed and a campaign for funds started. Just when they thought they had sufficient funds another lumber concern bought the tract at the other end of the glen. More money was forthcoming to buy the rights of this company and the historical association assumed notes to secure the title to the entire tract. Ultimately, the amount sufficient to obtain title was secured, about \$1,000, subscribed by more than 100 people, and the glen became the property of the society.

The struggle had taken several years and was not without its lights and shades. When it was heard that certain lands were wanted by the association, they were immediately purchased by speculators, who sold to the association at a profit. On the other hand, 10 acres adjacent to the glen were contributed by a progressive farmer.

The strife for possession being over, the association is now planning for the development of the tract. It is proposed to make the place more easily accessible, especially for teams and automobiles, by a new entrance directly at the end of the glen. Footpaths and bridges are to be built the full length in order that all the attractions of the place may be enjoyed by visitors.

The construction of the Belchertown-Amherst State highway will make the glen more readily accessible. Ownership by a public society promises a sane development along lines limited only by the common welfare.

#### RURAL COMMUNITY PARK, MARION CENTER, PA.

Who is insensible to the appeal of the old swimming hole when memory brings it back? Especially strong is the link with the past when the old swimming place is interwoven in memory with the old picnic ground. At no place, perhaps, has the strength of these ties been more manifest, if measured by results, than in the rural community of Marion Center, Pa. Since the day when the land was

deeded by a grateful Government to a Revolutionary War veteran, the little strip of woods on the edge of the village had been the center of the outdoor social life of the community. Every man and woman living in Marion Center since had come under its influence. The children had waded in the stream and bathed in the pool. The young men had played many a baseball contest near by. The girls had gathered wild flowers on the banks of the stream in summer and skated on its ice in winter. Home groups, farmers' clubs, schools, churches, lodges, and societies, not only from Marion Center but from miles around had picnicked in the grove. Since the days of the Revolution Independence Day had been celebrated there. Once a year since the Civil War the whole countryside had gathered there in memory of the dead. When the great World War was over, it was there that the people gathered to welcome home their heroes. Many a warm political campaign had been inaugurated under the elms and oaks. The religious life of the community had been quickened at campmeeting time. And once a year those who had gone away from the home community came back to be welcomed by relatives and friends at the home-coming celebration.

The spot (Fig. 2) had always been considered an integral part of the community, a permanent institution just as much as the town



FIG. 2.—Rural community park and playground. Old swimming hole in background. Marion Center, Pa.

government, the church, the school, or the grange. It had always been there for the free use and enjoyment of the people and always would be. When it was suddenly learned that this hallowed spot was in danger of being sold, that an outside corporation was about to denude the place of its timber and that as a result of this the spring and stream could dry up the people were in dismay. The spirit which animated the old Revolutionary War veteran took hold of the people. The matter was discussed by men and women in groups and small gatherings. Finally a mass meeting was held and after much discussion it was determined to organize a community association and purchase the piece of land "to preserve it forever for the free use of the people."

General contributions were decided upon as a method of financing the project, but there was no soliciting except through advertising in the local newspaper. There were 400 contributors from the village of 500 population and its surrounding farming section, half of the contributors being farmers. A notable response came from former residents of the village. The sum of \$2,800 was realized and the 14 acres of land purchased.

Much work yet remained to be done before the ideal in the minds of the people could be visualized. Tiling was put in and ditches dug



for drainage, roads and paths were built and surfaced with cinders, bridges were constructed, brush was grubbed out, rustic seats and picnic benches and tables were placed, the spring was curbed, a grand stand was improvised, electric lights were installed, and the baseball diamond was improved. An auditorium, 40 by 70 feet, is now under construction.

Voluntary labor and free materials were donated. A man who owned timber rights on the ground gave his profits on it to the association. The railroad hauled many carloads of cinders without charge and a dozen teams and the labor of many extra men was given during successive summers. To prevent the erection of anything unsightly between the borough line and the park, arrangements are under way to purchase seven intervening lots.

Seven trustees, four of whom were farmers, were elected by the subscribers to control the park, ownership resting with the association. A clause in the deed stipulates that should the property cease to be used as a public park the title would revert to the original owners.

The park is open to all organizations for any public use upon payment of a small maintenance fee. All concession privileges are retained by the association and receipts are placed in the maintenance fund. During a recent grange picnic, attended by 3,000 people, more than \$200 was realized from concessions.

A notable feature of the establishment of this park by the community was the ease and smoothness with which the operations were carried on. There were few difficulties to overcome and fewer objections made. Nearly everyone was in favor of the project and a fine spirit of cooperation was manifested. It served not only to solidify the various elements of the village and the adjacent farming section, but also to cement the ties binding to the home community those who had moved away.

The fame of this beauty spot and playground, the open-air center of a small rural community, has spread to various neighboring sections, and a number of villages are watching the outcome of the project with the idea of adopting similar plans.

**RURAL ATHLETIC FIELD AND COMMUNITY CENTER, WORTHINGTON  
(BERLIN), CONN.**

A dream of many years standing is now being realized in the rural community of Worthington, Conn. For a long time the leading men and women had been considering the desirability of a place that would serve for the recreational and social development of the neighborhood, the use of which would not be limited by the control of any one particular club or society but would tend to bring together the different elements of society in order that a harmonious and progressive community might be built up. Particularly there was need of a place where the local Boy Scouts and other young people's organizations could meet and carry on outdoor exercises. The pastor of the local church was perhaps the originator of the idea. Some years before the church had rented a hall to be used as a recreation center, but now something more comprehensive seemed to be needed.

While the project was under consideration a fortunate circumstance, from a community viewpoint, occurred. A house with ample

grounds, near the center of the neighborhood was destroyed by fire. A favorable opportunity was thus afforded for establishing the much-desired recreational center by securing control of this property.

The question was publicly agitated and mass meetings were held in the town hall for the discussion of the matter. The owner of the property agreed to donate it to the community if a responsible organization could be formed to receive title thereto. For this purpose the Worthington Community Association was incorporated with 12 charter members. A voting membership was organized of local men and women who should pay the annual membership fee of \$1. People outside the neighborhood were organized as dues-paying but non-voting members. The voting members elect a community council for purposes of management and the members of this council elect the usual officers from their own number. The grounds are open to the free use of all local residents whether members or not. (Fig. 3.)

Two thousand one hundred dollars was raised by subscription from 60 people for the purpose of putting the grounds in the desired condition. Much labor and materials were contributed. The center is maintained by membership dues, receipts from entertainments, and

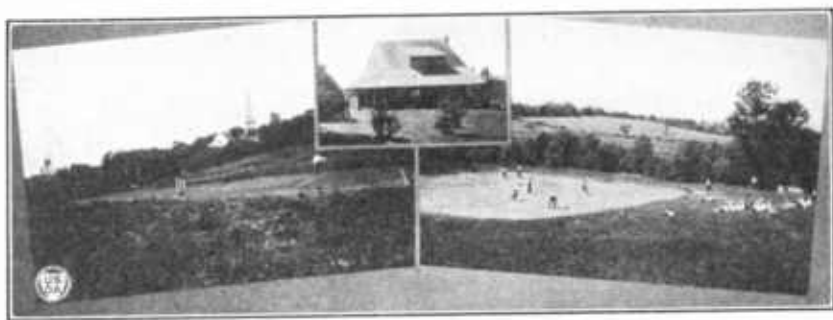


FIG. 3.—A rural community athletic field and community center. Worthington, Conn.

other sources. The last sheep roast realized \$350 and a lawn fête and sale netted \$200.

The grounds comprise 9 acres and the boundary lines are defined by a row of elms and cherries, while various kinds of shade trees are scattered over the upper part of the field. In the immediate front are vines and flowers. A baseball diamond has been made at the rear of the field and tennis courts have been constructed near the center. The barn has been reconstructed into a club house and furnished with folding chairs, tables, and benches. A fireplace gives a cheering and homelike touch and was built of stone, each member bringing one stone; some stones were brought from other States. The club house is used by the boy scouts, parent teachers' association, women's aid society, girl scouts, Daughters of the American Revolution, motherhood club, and men's club. Fairs, exhibits, dances, food sales, stereopticon lectures, and card parties are held in the building. Baseball games, tennis matches, children's playground exercises, lawn fêtes, and scout drills are given on the grounds.

Plans for the future include a kitchen as an addition to the club-house for which the women already have sufficient funds, the installation of croquet grounds, and more playground apparatus.

With the idea of permanence in mind, those in charge of the enterprise have been developing it slowly, and are endeavoring to develop a solid cooperative spirit. This little community of some 200 people has a recreation plant valued at \$5,000, with money in the treasury, well-considered future plans, and an institution which, as stated by one of its leaders, "is drawing all people together in a spirit of mutual helpfulness and developing a neighborhood atmosphere which speaks well for the future permanence and welfare of the community."

RIVERBANK IMPROVEMENT AND GATEWAY, UNADILLA, N. Y.

If one travels through the main street of the village of Unadilla, N. Y., on a summer day he will often find some automobile party picnicking on the banks of the stream beside the road. Tourist par-



FIG. 4.—A stream becomes a village gateway. Unadilla, N. Y.

ties passing through the village, with few exceptions, make at least a short stop there to rest and enjoy the quiet beauty of the spot.

The place is a triangular piece of ground 75 feet wide and 400 feet long where the main street and the river meet. The grass has been carefully cultivated and is kept mowed. A number of shade trees have been planted at desirable places.

The place is known not only to the casual tourist party but to the people of the towns for miles around, who frequently motor to the place to enjoy picnic parties on the banks of the stream. The people of the village, singly and in groups, frequently find diversion or rest here during both day and evening. It is on the Fourth of July, however, that it arouses the full appreciation of the public, for on the evening of that day is held the annual celebration in the nature of a water fête, and thousands gather on the bank to watch the gaily decorated and brightly lighted canoes and the display of fireworks.

The right to use this place was given by two well-to-do families who for generations have retained title to the land in front of their homes and between the main street and the river, as a public expression of the indebtedness which they felt to the community. A further incentive was the wish of the two families to erect a suitable memorial at the entrance of the town in memory of certain of their ancestors.

At a spot commanding the best view of the river and the various vistas a covered memorial seat of granite has been erected and a number of iron seats have been placed about the grounds. There is a small dock with steps leading down to the river. In the center of the plot is a large rock placed there in 1854 by the grandfather of the present owners. A neat fence surrounds all but the river side, with swinging gates as entrances. (Fig. 4.)

No charges are made, as the place is maintained by the owners, who say that they are fully repaid for their care and trouble by the enjoyment of those who use it. A sign placed on the grounds states that the grounds are privately owned but that the public is welcome if proper consideration is shown in the care of the place.

#### PUBLIC GROUNDS AND PUBLIC PLACES.

The early development of our country has been largely on the material side. Coming to a virgin wilderness, the first duty of our forefathers was to open up a new country and conquer natural difficulties. The struggle for existence was severe, the practical side of life was developed while less attention was given to the esthetic side. It is a hopeful sign that now that we have developed so highly the material side of life, we are beginning to recognize the importance of living itself, that the material must be accompanied by the beautiful and the spiritual if we are to enjoy the fullness of life.

This spirit is being shown in our public grounds and public places; in rural churches where the Creator of the beautiful is being worshipped among beautiful surroundings; in schools where pupils are taught the value of order and beauty by example; in courthouses and city halls which are becoming uplifting influences in the community through their well-planned buildings and attractive settings; in attractive country roads which not merely take one somewhere but which entertain and rest the tired mind on the way; in farm homes where the work side of farm life is separated from and not allowed to smother the home life; and in cemeteries where loved ones are given their last resting place in quiet, beautiful, and dignified surroundings.

#### RURAL IMPROVEMENT AND A RURAL CEMETERY, DUBLIN, OHIO.

Fortunately not all the beautiful creations of the world are found in the closed estates of men of wealth or the restricted reserves or parks of prosperous municipalities. Some of man's most beautiful handiwork is found in the obscure corners of the earth.

Dublin with its 239 inhabitants was like many other old-fashioned villages located outside the main currents of life. All the essentials were there, the main street, the general store, the blacksmith shop, the

country doctor, and of late years a real touch of modernity, the garage; yes, and the old cemetery with its tumbled-down fence and general unkempt appearance. The chief attention it received was the mowing of the grass for the feed it produced. The village did not even own the cemetery. As long ago as 1855 a group of people had formed a cemetery association and bought 6 acres for a burial ground for the use of all the people of the village. In 1915, 4 acres more were purchased. During the years two vaults had been built, one privately and one by the township. (Fig. 5.)

Such were the conditions until about eight years ago the neglect became too much for one of the town's citizens. Appearing unexpectedly before the association he impressed upon the members the neglected condition of the cemetery and stated what he wanted to do.



FIG. 5.—An improved rural cemetery. Dublin, Ohio.

The association told him to go ahead with his plans and that they would stand back of him. He was appointed caretaker of the cemetery at moderate pay for actual work done. The fences were repaired, weeds removed, grass cut, and paths built. Again he appeared before the association requesting that money be supplied for the purchase of flowers, trees, and shrubs. Again the association gave him its support in spite of doubt on the part of some members. New trees were set out and the neighborhood ransacked for tulips, hyacinths, rose bushes, and various shrubs. About this time a few peonies were set out on a private cemetery lot by its owners and a vision came to the sexton. Securing permission from the owner, he from time to time divided and transplanted some of them to other parts of the cemetery until it suggested a field of peonies.

There were many discouragements. Many trees were damaged by the cyclone of 1913 and had to be removed. A number of the lot owners failed to keep their lots trim and neat, and the beauty of the cemetery was marred. Rather than have this condition prevail the caretaker assumed the entire care of the cemetery. He was, however, more than recompensed for the difficulties encountered by the faith and support of the association, by the encouragement and cooperation of his townspeople, and especially by the favorable comment upon the beauty of the obscure little cemetery. On Memorial Day people come many miles to attend the simple ceremonies and admire the blooming peonies. And throughout the year many touring parties who have heard of the miracle wrought by the modest caretaker go out of their way to pass by the cemetery and enjoy its restful beauty and dignity.

RURAL IMPROVEMENT AS EXEMPLIFIED BY A PUBLIC LIBRARY, EAGLE ROCK, CALIF.



FIG. 6.—A rural library may be housed in beautiful surroundings. Eagle Rock, Calif.

Nearly every public library has a section devoted to illustrated books on art with a considerable treatment of the subject of rural art. Those responsible for the Eagle Rock Library, however, have realized that the making of beautiful things is of as vital importance as assembling information about them. The library building (Fig. 6) is strikingly attractive. Effective use was made of local materials and the principles of the Mission form of architecture were fully employed.

Not content with a beautiful building, those in charge were determined that it should be placed in an attractive setting, even though nearly all available funds were exhausted. In this way they received practical cooperation from local people in the way of plants and shrubs from private homes and neighboring nurseries. Citi-

zens joined with the members of the library board and the librarian in the actual work of planting. As a rule, shrubs and trees adapted to the locality were planted, different varieties of palms, the matilija poppy, and other semitropical plants. The beauty of the open lawn was emphasized while the building was appropriately framed with various ornamental trees planted at either side. Expenses for maintenance are provided by the library tax fund, although plants and shrubs are still often received from local sources.

The library and its grounds furnished an incentive for the improvement of the grounds of other public buildings and private homes, and it is said that the building and grounds have been duplicated in the State of Virginia and even in far-off Persia.

#### ROADSIDE PLANTING, BURLINGTON COUNTY, N. J.



FIG. 7.—A pleasant country road in Burlington County, N. J.

A country road between Burlington and Julinstown, N. J., is shaded by large maple trees. These trees were planted for 1 mile on both sides of the road, between 35 and 40 years ago, by the owner of the adjoining farm for the purpose of improving his estate and furnishing shade to the traveler. Openings at intervals (Fig. 7) provide for views, but the effect would have been increased had the trees been massed a little more.

The heavy foliage of the trees serve to protect from driving winds the fruit trees shown in the illustration on both sides of the road, while the distance of the branches from the ground leaves an open space, so that the air and light may pass through to the crops, and leave the landscape free. Who can set a limit to the measure of time during which these trees will continue to give shade, protection, and pleasure?

## SOCIALIZING THE GROUNDS OF A RURAL HIGH SCHOOL, EAST BLOOMFIELD, N. Y.

Several miles from a railway in Ontario County, N. Y., lies the village of East Bloomfield with a population of 275 people. In 1908 the school district voted to erect a new school building. With more than usual foresight it was decided to secure grounds large enough for all the activities connected with a modern school. With this end in view 4 acres of rough farm land located in the center of the district was purchased.

The building (Fig. 8) is an attractive up-to-date school, costing \$27,000, with assembly hall, study hall, kitchen, laboratories, kindergarten room, gymnasium, and manual training and home economics (or household arts) rooms, in addition to the usual recitation rooms. In the rear of the building are facilities for basket ball, volley ball, and tennis, with two baseball diamonds and a running track.



FIG. 8.—An inviting rural high school building. East Bloomfield, N. Y.

In contrast with the usual rural school with its plain building, and bare restricted site, provision was made not only for a building dignified in appearance and of good design with ample grounds, but for a system of ground improvement through plantings and the arrangement of walks, drives, and play spaces. (Fig. 9.) A landscape architect was employed to draw plans for grading and locating cement walks, and for the planting of trees and shrubs. These plans were carried out under the direction of a local civil engineer who also supervised the installation of a thorough system of tile drainage. Planting was begun in 1910 and continued for three seasons. In all about 2,900 trees and shrubs of 90 varieties were planted.

The cost of these ground improvements, met by school funds, was \$2,100, itemized as follows: Architect's plans, \$100; cement walks, \$600; grading, drainage, purchase and planting of shrubbery, \$1,400. That the work on the grounds was supervised by the local engineer



without cost saved the district considerable expense and furnished a fine example of individual civic interest.

The maintenance of the grounds is provided for by district funds. This expense has been small since the first two or three years, as the shrubbery is set in solid masses so that it soon occupied the ground to the exclusion of all other growth and needs very little attention.

The school board was fortunate in being readily supported by a progressive electorate which realized that the money spent would be much more than offset by the value to the community of the new citizenship developed in such surroundings. Even those with an eye only for the material were favorably influenced by the increase in property values induced by an institution of this kind. Of course there were the usual short-sighted objectors, found in every community, but their objections have largely disappeared.

The results have proved beneficial in some ways not anticipated. Since the school grounds were improved many private grounds in the village have been improved, some in accordance with the plans of the same architect and some under the direction of the same



FIG. 9.—A country high school athletic field combining beauty with utility. East Bloomfield, N. Y.

engineer. The grounds of the grange hall have recently been formally arranged and planted.

The village is located on the main road from Albany to Buffalo and the school grounds attract the attention of many tourists and descriptive articles have appeared in periodicals published in Kansas City and San Francisco, written by residents of those cities who had observed the grounds in passing. Favorable notice has also been given by the State department of education, the State college of forestry, and the State school of agriculture.

#### DISTRICT SCHOOL WITH IMPROVED SURROUNDINGS, CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

On the edge of a beautiful lake shore drive near Canandaigua, N. Y., stood an old one-room wooden schoolhouse erected in 1819. The deed called for land the same size as the building and the out-houses and playgrounds were on highway land. The yard was rough, rocky and weed-covered with a scraggly path leading up to the door. Many in the community recognized that the old school house was a blot upon an otherwise beautiful landscape and when one of the leading citizens became especially interested in the case, there was a rallying cry for improvement. Meetings were held and

plans discussed. The man who owned the adjacent farm agreed to give one acre of land for a site. A meeting of taxpayers voted a levy of \$2,000 for the erection of a new building and the improvement of the grounds. An endowment fund was decided upon to provide means for maintenance. Through a series of local entertainments, voluntary subscriptions, and bequests, the sum of \$1,000 was raised which was accepted by the trustees with the understanding that the interest only would be used, and that for the care and improvement of the ground. This fund was accepted by the University of the State of New York to be held in trust for the purpose intended.

A modern building of good architectural appearance was erected, containing recitation room, library, lobby, cloak rooms and lavatories. Considerable labor was donated by the citizens. The grounds were graded and terraced in accordance with plans drawn up at the State College of Agriculture. Elms, white pine, Norway maple and spruce, dogwood, spiraea, and barberry were planted. A hedge



FIG. 10.—A district school may be made attractive. Canandaigua, N. Y.

of 100 Lombardy poplars along the rear and one side forms an attractive background. (Fig. 10.)

Thus instead of a century-old, one-room schoolhouse on a barren site, this district has an up-to-date school plant with sufficient play space and grounds that are a genuine inspiration.

#### TRADE AND CIVIC CENTERS.

Rural village life is intimately connected with farm life. The village is the trade center and frequently the educational, religious and social center for farmers. The life of the village is almost wholly dependent on the surrounding farming community. Whatever makes the village more orderly, more harmonious, more beautiful, more efficient, is of vital interest to the farmer.

This emphasizes the importance of the village portal—the gateway from the country to the village. A neat, orderly, inviting

entrance in the form of a wagon road, or trolley and railway station makes entrance and exit a pleasure, tempts the traveler to tarry and makes cooperation between village and country easy and pleasant. Streets that are parked, planted with trees and lined with business houses of dignified, though simple design, not only develop village pride but usually become the most effective trade centers.

Villages are finding that the central, orderly grouping of such public buildings as post office, town hall, school, and church as civic centers makes for convenience and efficient administration and meets the canons of good taste in civic design. Farmers, too, are recognizing the value of the central orderly grouping of rural public buildings, and in advanced communities the consolidated school with its garden or demonstration plot and playground, the church, the grange hall, the library or community house, and perhaps a community



FIG. 11.—Not all "Main Streets" are bare and uninviting. Granby Street, Granby, Conn., is lined with attractive open-lawn residences.

grove as a picnic ground and outdoor recreation center, are often all grouped in a central location.

#### RURAL CIVIC CENTER, GRANBY, CONN.

Granby is the usual New England agricultural town, made up of several villages with a common center. That part in which we are interested consists of one organized fire district, with a population of 280, and its center is Granby Street (Fig. 11). The citizens were always interested in the civic and esthetic development of the place. Running water, electric lights, and fire apparatus made for the convenience and protection of the people, while other features made for attractiveness.

Granby Street is a wide avenue lined with stately elms and with attractive homes separated from the street by spacious well-

kept lawns. At the head of the street there used to be a gully which served as the village dumping place. Realizing the importance of an inviting gateway, an improvement association was formed and voluntary contributions were secured. The gully was filled in, shade trees and ornamental shrubs planted, paths and tennis courts laid out, and the place was dedicated as a village park. Later a Civil War monument of good design was erected at the entrance. This park is the scene of sports, band concerts, outdoor entertainments, and various public celebrations. (Fig. 12.)

Improvements were also made in the old village cemetery, where burials dated back to 1690. A cemetery association was formed and capitalized at \$1,000, trees and shrubs were set out, drives and fences repaired, the grass mowed, and provisions made for the permanent upkeep of the place.

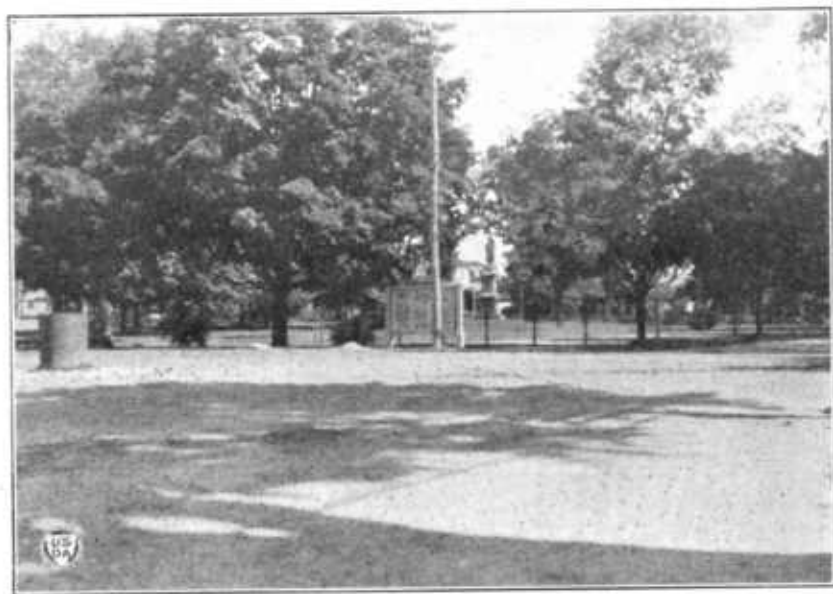


FIG. 12.—Village park showing the World War honor roll, the Civil War monument, tennis court, and band stand, Granby, Conn.

With such a background of civic interest we are prepared for a more striking instance of community effort. About five years ago two local residents, of old village stock, made known their decision to found a library in recognition of benefits received by themselves and their ancestors from the community.

Shortly afterwards the citizens found it advisable to change the local educational system to conform to modern principles of teaching, and thus a new school building became necessary. Finally the desirability of a special building where the social affairs of the village might be held, and the need of a public playground, had long been felt by the community.

Here was the opportunity, therefore, of making a reality of an idea long entertained by local leaders; that is, the establishment of a

village community center, where all the common needs—social, religious, educational, and recreational—should find their satisfaction.

About this time the village church, which from early days had been the center of the religious and social life of Granby Street and the surrounding farming community, was destroyed by fire.

As the church was perhaps the strongest local organization and as most of the people of the community were either members or adherents, it was decided to make it the focus of the enterprise. Accordingly about 4 acres of land were purchased by the church, which in turn gave ground for the library, community building, and school.

It was planned to make the church a symbol of all that is beautiful. The result was a well-equipped and convenient structure of attractive architectural design without and an interior of exceptional beauty and dignity. It was erected at a cost of \$20,000, raised through general voluntary contributions of the people of the village and farming community, a few special gifts, and a small loan.



FIG. 13.—An attractive rural civic center, Granby, Conn. Left, library; center, church; right, community building. The school house is located at the rear of the library.

The library was erected at a cost of \$10,000 and has one story, with the usual library features, club rooms in the basement, the whole being under the care of a librarian.

To the south of the church was placed the community building of somewhat plainer design. It has an assembly hall with chairs for 200 people, which may be quickly removed, leaving the floor open for other purposes; a well-appointed stage and dressing rooms, a spacious dining room, and well-equipped kitchen in the basement. It was built at a cost of \$11,000 by the voluntary contributions from a large proportion of the community, and is the center of the social life of the village. (Fig. 13.)

Immediately to the rear of the library on a cross street is located the new schoolhouse, of harmonious design, so arranged structurally that new rooms may be added when the contemplated consolidation of districts is effected. It is the property of the town, which spent \$5,000 in its erection.

In front of the schoolhouse, and at the rear of the other three buildings, is a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -acre lot which completes the five-sided community

group. This is a general playground and recreational field for the use of the entire community.

Already this community center has demonstrated its worth, not alone in focusing the village life in a common center but in serving as an example to other rural communities. Since this group was completed the citizens, led by the civic club, have been instrumental in having a hospital established for the use of the community. (Fig. 14.)

The resources of this little village are probably no greater than those of many other villages of similar population. The principal



FIG. 14.—The community hospital across the street from the civic center, Granby, Conn. Insert shows school house located in rear of library, shown in Figure 13.

industries are fruit raising and tobacco culture. There are no factories. But it is possessed of a citizenship of high civic, social, and religious ideals which realizes the worth of public order and convenience, is not unmindful of the value of the beautiful even in the country, takes the responsibilities of citizenship seriously, and, finally, is determined to maintain an enduring and satisfying country life.

#### A VILLAGE REMADE, OJAI, CALIF.

Fifteen miles away and 1,200 feet above Ventura-by-the-Sea, in California, lies a beautiful valley in the midst of which was the old settlement of Nordhoff. Nordhoff was a typical early frontier settlement of the old régime with the usual plain one-story frame store buildings on one side of the street (Fig. 15), with old wooden sidewalks running along the unpaved street. On the opposite side were several dwelling houses of the usual style in such settlements. The drabness of the place was, of course, reflected in its social life.

To awaken this primitive village to its commonplace condition, one of its leading citizens purchased 10 acres on the opposite side of the street from the stores and constructed a park with tennis courts, a grandstand, and clubhouse. Along the side of the park



FIG. 15.—Main street before the village was remade, Ojai, Calif.

facing the street a Spanish pergola was erected. The storekeepers were quick to see the contrast between their old worn-out buildings and the other side of the street with its beautiful Spanish arches and low walls inclosing a forest of live oaks. At that opportune moment the merchants were told if they would make certain changes



FIG. 16.—An inviting place to trade. Main Street Improved. Park on right. Ojai, Calif.

on their side of the street, they, or the town, would be given the park together with a new post office building.

The offer was accepted. Architectural plans were drawn up and executed, resulting in a uniform arched concrete front connecting all the stores. (Fig. 16.) At a cost of a few hundred dollars each

storekeeper found himself the owner of a building not only of considerably greater value but also of much more attractive appearance. The town had lost a row of ugly buildings and gained



FIG. 17.—The old post office, Ojai, Calif.

a picturesque and harmonious street, park, and post office building, the latter being built in the form of a stately Spanish tower.

The main part of this work was completed in 1917 at a cost of \$30,000. Since that time the improvements of the place have gradually continued at a cost of \$55,000. The merchants themselves maintained the work until the recent incorporation of the village under the name of Ojai, the name of the beautiful valley in which it



FIG. 18.—The new post office, Ojai, Calif.

is located. The whole project has demonstrated what may be accomplished through cooperation between merchants and citizens stimulated and led by a kindly spirit who believes in the practical value of the beautiful. (Figs. 17 and 18.)



The village now seems to be midway between the old and the new. It does not have the bustle and push and go of the so-called modern village, although it has all the conveniences of wholesome modern living. The atmosphere is that of a village dreaming in the sun.

When entering, one passes, first, a beautiful cloistered church, then a stately Spanish tower, rising above the new post office. Opposite is the new hotel, of Spanish design, and just beyond is the long Spanish arcade housing the business enterprises, including the new bank. Across the road lies the park with its Spanish arches and low walls inclosing the "forest," clubhouse, and tennis courts. The social and recreational life of the community are symbolized by restful parks, smooth boulevards, stately shade trees, pleasant riding paths, clubhouses, tennis courts, country places, and hotels and homes with wide verandas and beautiful vistas. The village as a whole, with its quiet beauty and good order, together with its wholesome social life, strikes a note of harmony, beauty, and restfulness.

An effort for improvement of this kind is sure to have an influence on other towns and people. A citizen writes:

The result of the transformation of this village is one of which every merchant is very proud. Citizens and officials of other towns have come here to study the work. No doubt other villages and towns have been much inspired by the work here. A daily occurrence is for visitors to come and exclaim over its joys. It is very much appreciated. The common exclamation is: "Why don't we have more such places everywhere?"

A RURAL COMMUNITY CENTER, ORANGE TOWNSHIP, BLACKHAWK COUNTY,  
IOWA.

In the center of Orange Township is a row of well-kept homes and public buildings on both sides of a smooth paved road. The question sometimes asked is, "Where is the town?" meaning where is the general store, blacksmith shop, post office, grain elevator? As a matter of fact the only buildings, other than homes, are a consolidated school and a community church. It is not a town or village, only a community center. The well-kept homes with wide lawns in front and garden plots at the rear are largely those of retired farmers who, having spent their allotted time on the work of the farm, have decided to live their remaining years in the country where they have accomplished their life work and in so doing add their means and their experience to those of others in building a clean, healthful, and permanent rural life.

The homes are modern and possess most of the conveniences of city homes, while the gardens connect the interests of the people with their former occupation. The two public buildings (Figs. 19 and 20) are true rural institutions linked with the life of the country. In the school, representing the union of 10 one-room districts, an attempt is made to interest the children in the characteristic things of their daily lives and link the school with the farm and home. The boys have agricultural projects as a part of their school work and the products of their manual training are articles of actual use on the farm. The girls are taught to make their own clothing and to prepare meals. The church, although denominational, is the only one in the township and a very large proportion of the people are active members of the church and Sunday school.

Both the school and the church have exerted a particularly deep influence on the social life of the community. In the basement of

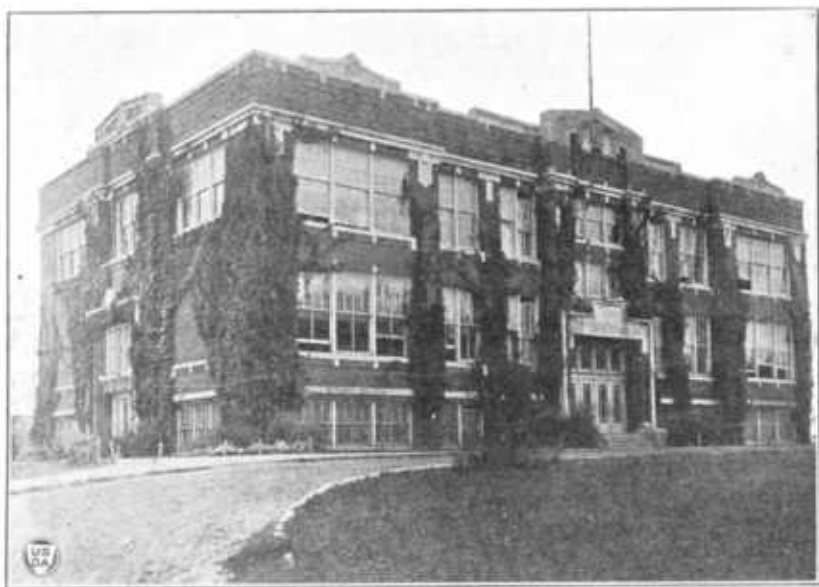


FIG. 19.—The township school, center of indoor activities, Orange Township, Blackhawk County, Iowa.

the church is a well-equipped kitchen and a dining room, where community spreads and banquets are frequently held. On the main floor is a women's rest room furnished with rockers and couches

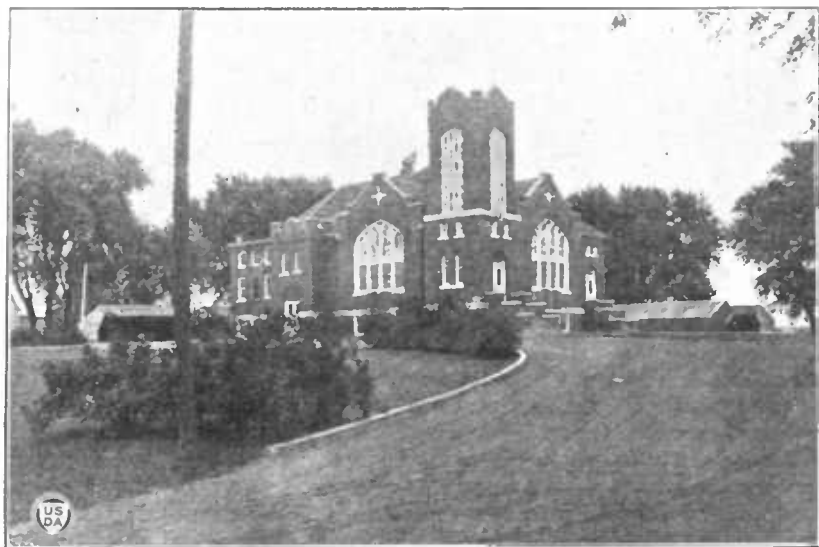


FIG. 20.—The church, center of religious and social activities, Orange Township, Blackhawk County, Iowa.

and beds for small children. The people have organized themselves into a community center with a community council in charge, which consists of the heads of eight prominent organizations. The council, at the beginning of the school year, arranges a program of social, educational, musical, and athletic events which are held weekly in the schoolhouse when possible.

In the pioneer days there had been many places where the people could go for picnics—lake shores, streams, and waterfalls—but these places were gradually commercialized and brought under the control of private interests. In the neighborhood there was a large maple grove, which was taken over at a nominal rental and placed under the control of the school as being the most permanent local organization. Voluntary contributions were used in this undertaking. At a community “working bee” the grove was cleaned, the ground



FIG. 21.—The picnic ground, center of outdoor community activities. Orange Township, Blackhawk County, Iowa.

leveled, trees trimmed, picnic benches made by the school manual training class and playground apparatus were installed and a bandstand was erected. (Fig. 21.) When the work was completed the women served a bountiful supper.

At the beginning of summer the community council now prepares a program of outdoor amusements, held every two weeks in the grove, consisting of organized play and story hour for the children, baseball contests, band concerts, motion pictures with orchestral accompaniment, and community picnics. The community picnic has assumed an important place in the social life of the people and each year finds at least one such gathering for both old and young sponsored by such organizations as the grange, boys' and girls' club, cow-testing association, Holstein association, public school, Sunday school, church, or county women's Christian temperance union. These are augmented by the harvest home picnic, to which

old residents come back; the newcomers' picnic, at which the newcomers to the township are guests; the Fourth of July picnic; and family picnics.

Thus in a purely rural community, similar to thousands of others in the United States, a group of people, practically all farmers, are endeavoring by the organization of the community on a social basis to make an attractive rural life so that farming people will be content to remain a permanent part of the agricultural community.

And with what result? A survey of this township made by an Iowa college showed that the number of young people in the township 20 years of age or older is 104, 54 young men and 50 young women. By far the majority in each case are now on the farm or stated that they expected to go back to the farm. Twenty-eight of



FIG. 22.—Sidewalk protection in a warm country. Chandler, Ariz.

the 50 young women are married; 21 of these, or 75 per cent, are married to farmers.

The survey indicates that in the township the number of young persons remaining on farms is larger than the average of Iowa communities. It seems safe to assume that the attempt of the people to strengthen the community spirit on the moral, religious, and social side has been, in part at least, responsible for this.

#### IMPROVEMENT IN A RURAL COMMUNITY, CHANDLER, ARIZ.

The desirability, in a hot climate, of protecting persons and sidewalks from the direct rays of the sun resulted in the construction of a unique protecting screen in Chandler, Ariz., by one of its citizens. The wooden framework (Fig. 22), covered by vines, extends a distance of two blocks. No great amount of attention to the shelter has

been needed after the original expense. As a sidewalk protection and town ornament it has received much favorable comment and has been copied in various other places in that section of the country.

Irrigation ditches passing through corporate limits often present difficulties in the general scheme of village improvement. Too often



FIG. 23.—A well-treated irrigation ditch. Chandler, Ariz.

they are considered as necessary evils, much as the town dump was formerly regarded, and little attempt is made to incorporate them into the general plan of betterment.

In Chandler the difficulty has been met in a novel way. Rows of trees were planted along the banks of both sides of the ditch and a

concrete walk was constructed next to each row of trees, the whole making an attractive promenade along running water in an arid country. (Fig. 23.) This landscape effect is one of the main features of the town. The walks extend from the railway station down through the middle of one of the streets to the center of the town and out to the edge of town, a total distance of half a mile.

The founder of the village formulated the idea and financed the work in the belief that a new town should be built not only on practical lines but on principles underlying the ideas of cleanliness, order, and beauty.

An attractive approach to a farm home suggests cordial welcome and a home of worth and dignity. The owners of the driveway, shown in Figure 24, have succeeded, in an arid country, in constructing a driveway both inviting and useful, for the trees in this particu-



FIG. 24.—An inviting approach to a farm home. Chandler, Ariz.

lar example are date palms, four years old, and at maturity are expected to return a considerable profit each year.

It is not surprising that a number of other farmers in the vicinity have made use of similar ideas and have made their drives both attractive and profitable.

Every section of the country has local material, such as palm, maple, elm, catalpa, walnut, or eucalyptus, which might well be used for similar purposes.

#### A TOWN GATEWAY, LOCUST VALLEY, N. Y.

A number of railroad corporations believe that it is good practice, from the standpoint of their own interests, to make their stations and grounds an attractive town gateway, regardless of local assistance, and have established a general policy in that direction.

It often happens, however, that the best general and permanent results, from the viewpoint of the town, are obtained by community cooperation with the railroad. A town that meets the railroad halfway in the matter with local aid deserves to, and generally does, receive greater financial consideration from the railroad.

Formerly the station in the small village of Locust Valley, N. Y., was an 18 by 28-foot frame building, set in most commonplace surroundings on farm land which was also used for a pasture.

The coming of several new families seemed to quicken a community consciousness and a campaign was started for a better station and more attractive station grounds. An indirect result was the formation, as an aid to the work, of a neighborhood association which, incidentally, exists to this day, and has a remarkable list of civic achievements to its credit. In a few years a dignified and commodious station of durable material took the place of the small wooden structure.

Considerable additional land was secured as a station site and the whole was formally arranged and planted, and walks and drive-ways were built. Through cooperation between the railroad and citizens about \$2,500 was raised and expended in this work. Since



FIG. 25.—An attractive gateway to a rural village. The ground improvements at the rear are on the station grounds. Locust Valley, N. Y.

then more land has been acquired until now the grounds are 5 acres in area.

Across the track was a lumber and coal yard. The view from the station was screened by lilac bushes and a lattice fence covered with clematis vines. Later a group of members of the neighborhood association acquired the land on which the yard was situated in order that the land might be used for parking and other public purposes. (Fig. 25.)

The work is maintained through a cooperative agreement between the railroad company and the neighborhood association, the railroad agreeing to contribute \$300 a year and the association the remainder, which has averaged about \$400 a year. Laborers have been hired to keep the grounds in condition by oiling the roads, caring for the lawn, clearing up refuse, pruning the trees, and attending to plants and shrubs.

The agreement has been in effect for a number of years and has seemed to work satisfactorily. One of the chief benefits of the improvement of station grounds is the suggestive effect that it has on the improvement of the grounds of public buildings and private residences. A member of the station grounds committee of the neighborhood association writes:

The community spirit has spread and I think everyone is trying to keep home and grounds in good condition. Improvements for the public benefit are usually carried out without much opposition, which indicates that the neighborhood feeling is now deeply rooted.

#### CONCLUSION.

City planning is coming to occupy a permanent place in our civic life. Country planning should follow city planning, although there are at the present time good reasons for believing that the interests of our national life can best be conserved by major emphasis on the proper planning and development of our rural sections and the conservation of their resources. It is hoped that this publication of some actual accomplishments in the field of rural planning, from the social viewpoint, may aid, through the force of example, in bringing about this consummation.



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